Lured by the elements of LoFoSto spilling into the main room, we turn the corner and enter a different kind of space. Where Claus is expansive and stately, Chan is intimate and unassuming. With its smaller scale, subdued lighting, and drawings arranged on the walls, this grotto-like space is made communal, like the hearth around which stories are shared.

Chan and Claus’ works both bear the “handprint” of their personal narratives: the first through her history of immigration, the latter through the exploration of her Mohawk roots and world-view. In striving to relate these narratives to the spectators, Lucie Chan and Hannah Claus derive intricate systems from elemental components, and then elegantly consolidate these to create a holistic experience with multiple points of entry for the viewer. Each work poses a simple, but profound question: in the face of displacement, how does one find a meaningful place and a sense of belonging?

P.F. and C.H.


3) Exhibited at Montreal, arts intercultures, February 10 – March 12, 2011.


Elementary Particles

Works by Lucie Chan and Hannah Claus
Curated by Peter Flemming and Claudine Hubert
November 10 to December 15, 2012
it is theorized that "craft [...] helps us connect with our origins and rediscover our basic needs."1 Craft theorist Esther Leslie points to the parallels that philosopher Walter Benjamin traces between making and telling, declaring the act of storytelling itself to be a craft. To Benjamin, true experience is conceived as the close and practiced knowledge of what is at hand, and storytelling "sinks the thing into the life of the storyteller, in order to bring it out of him again. Thus traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way the hand-print of the potter clings to the clay vessel."2

Working with themes of community and memory, Lucie Chan explores the aggregate narratives of individual stories that tie to her personal experience of loss and a broader sense of togetherness. In her 2009 work On the Surface3, Chan traced the profiles of myriad faces, gathering them into the shapes of leaves—an organic genealogical tree more akin to shared experience than blood relations. At OBORO, Chan presents LoFoSto, short for "Longing for Stories"; the abridged title evokes an intangible language bridging the voices of three Asian women, interviewed extensively by Chan in Montreal in 2009. Building from this material, she drew over 100 images in red ink (a signifier of luck) depicting these immigrant stories, gradually amassing a collection of silent, animated portraits—singular elements quilted to convey a sense of comfort to the visitor, who may recognize her own narrative through that of a stranger.

In her installation practice, Hannah Claus strives to "[…] create sensorial landscapes that are meant to provoke a subtle re-thinking of boundaries and borders of cultural, historical and personal associations [and] a tension that highlights fragile and tenuous qualities inherent to the relationships between self and other. Repetition, accumulation and pattern suggest codes or languages that are meant to be deciphered. These provide a basis for expression, interpretation and express a desire for communication."4 Claus draws on her personal history, notably her Mohawk roots, integrating references to natural elements as basic components of our physical world.